

DRAFT

Linscomb Wildlife Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2016-2025



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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Linscomb Wildlife Area, # 9904
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** In 1998 the initial 1,728 acre portion was deeded to the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) from the NeVada P. Linscomb Trust. In 2003 an additional 146 acres was purchased by the Linscomb Trust and then deeded to the Department.
- **Acreage:** 1,874 acres
- **County:** St. Clair
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

The Linscomb Wildlife Area (WA) is made up of a variety of habitats. Management efforts will be focused on managing/restoring tallgrass prairie, woodlands, savannas, glades, and streams that will support native flora and fauna. Other open lands will be managed for early successional habitats that support many wildlife species with particular focus on eastern cottontail rabbits and northern bobwhite quail. Portions of the area will be used to increase Missouri citizens' awareness of the values and benefits of diverse and native grasslands and demonstrate various management techniques for achieving desired habitat conditions.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Linscomb WA is a healthy, diverse, and sustainable mosaic of grassland, woodland, cropland, old-field, and aquatic communities for future generations to use and enjoy.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

A. Priority Areas: Linscomb WA is within the Upper Osage Grasslands Priority Geography which is focused on grassland, savanna and prairie stream protection, management, and restoration. A portion of the area is also included in the Simms Creek Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area.

B. Natural Areas: None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are not known from this site, but are found in the surrounding area. Area Manager will consult annually with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. Caves:** None
- C. Springs:** None

III. Existing Infrastructure

- A monument recognizing the contributions of the NeVada P. Linscomb Trust
- 3 gravel parking lots
- 7 non-stocked, man-made ponds

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions:** None known.
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:**
 - Magellan Pipeline has an easement running from the southwest corner of the area to the northeast portion. There is an inspection station on the area (Figure 2).
 - The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers owns a flood easement on 628 acres of the area (Figure 2).
- D. Cultural Resources:** Yes, known cultural resources are present, including old home foundations. Records are kept with the Department Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Hazards:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) A very small portion of native tallgrass prairie, which historically covered about half of the area, escaped conversion. Opportunities exist to reconstruct native grasslands on a significant scale that would reduce fragmentation and reconnect

the small remnant parcels in a way that could facilitate movement of low-mobility, prairie-obligate species.

- 2) Forest inventories recently completed (2010) for the area identified places suited for glade and woodland restoration.
- 3) Numerous invasive plants such as sericea lespedeza, crown vetch, Japanese honeysuckle, Johnson grass, and tall fescue are established on the area.
- 4) Woody encroachment is an issue in managing the open land portions of the area.
- 5) Studies and monitoring programs are in place to monitor vegetation, soil biology, grassland birds and pollinator response to management efforts.

Management Objective 1: Manage remnant prairies to maintain diversity.

Strategy 1: Survey and monitor areas for rare and endangered species. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Monitor for invasive species and, if found, take action to eradicate them using management practices including but not limited to spraying, mowing, and prescribed fire. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Monitor and remove woody species. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Manage prairies with management practices including but not limited to mowing, prescribed fire and grazing. (Wildlife)

Strategy 5: Continue annual vegetation and invertebrate monitoring during grassland restoration activities. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Restore grasslands at elevations and locations that provide connectivity to remnant prairie tracts and provide line-of-sight with nearby grassland areas such as Taberville and Wah'Kon-Tah Prairies .

Strategy 1: Convert some cropland, food plots, cool season grass fields, and old fields to diverse grassland plantings to reduce fragmentation, improve small game habitat, and connect the remnant prairie parcels. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Remove trees from fence rows, field borders, and grassland stream riparian areas to reduce grassland fragmentation, raptor perches, and predator travel corridors. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Monitor potential restoration sites for invasive species. Remove invasive species when found using management practices including but not limited to spraying, mowing, and prescribed fire. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Use diverse prairie seed harvested from local tallgrass prairies for restoration plantings. (Wildlife)

Strategy 5: Manage plantings with management practices including but not limited to mowing, prescribed fire, and grazing. (Wildlife)

Strategy 6: Continue annual vegetation monitoring and soil sampling to track prairie plant establishment. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Increase and maintain the herbaceous plant component in woodlands and glades.

Strategy 1: Collect data annually at established vegetation monitoring plots to monitor changes in vegetation composition and structural diversity. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Use prescribed fire to remove leaf litter and promote plant growth. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Implement the management prescriptions of the Forest Management Plan by the end of FY18. (Forestry)

Strategy 4: Follow the appropriate Best Management Practices (BMP's) outlined in the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice* booklet when conducting silvicultural operations. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 5: Follow the appropriate *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation* standards. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Management Objective 4: Maintain forest cover in a healthy, productive, and sustainable condition.

Strategy 1: Implement the management prescriptions of the Forest Management Plans by the end of FY18. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Follow the appropriate Best Management Practices (BMP's) outlined in the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice* booklet when conducting silvicultural operations. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Follow the appropriate *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation* standards. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Management Objective 5: Manage natural communities as part of a larger landscape by cooperating with/assisting neighboring landowners. (Private Land Services, Wildlife)

Strategy 1: Offer technical assistance and cost share funding to adjacent landowners to increase and/or improve grassland acres and improve water quality in streams and ponds. (Private Land Services, Fisheries, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Coordinate with cooperating landowners to manage landscapes that extend beyond Department boundaries. (Private Land Services, Wildlife)

Management Objective 6: Consider whether livestock grazing will occur on the area to increase plant diversity and improve vegetative structure.

Strategy 1: If livestock grazing occurs on the area, a grazing plan will be designed in collaboration with Wildlife and Fisheries staff prior to introduction of the animals. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Management Objective 7: Reduce the potential for surface runoff and soil erosion.

Strategy 1: Remove some fields from annual cropping rotation by planting to a diverse grassland mix or perennial green browse. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Incorporate cover crops into the current row crop rotation. (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The Osage River forms the northern boundary of the area. At that point it is part of Harry S. Truman Reservoir, which causes parts of the area to flood at times.
- 2) There are several old channel meanders, sloughs and scours along the Osage River that act as seasonal wetlands. With proper management, these could provide important spring migration habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds.
- 3) Simms Creek runs along the eastern boundary of the area and has been identified as an Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area.
- 4) The few small ponds not influenced by Truman Reservoir are not large enough to support healthy balanced fish populations. With proper management these ponds could provide important breeding grounds for amphibians.

Management Objective 1: Protect clean and healthy waters.

Strategy 1: Use management techniques that minimize soil disturbance and erosion. Follow the appropriate *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation* standards. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Establish or maintain riparian corridors of appropriate vegetation type along all streams on the area.

Strategy 1: Maintain a forested riparian corridor along Simms Creek and Osage River a minimum width of 100 feet from top of bank. Headwater streams in grassland areas will be managed for a shrub component consistent with the grassland habitat, where not limited by area boundary, access road, parking lot, or utility easement. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Where access roads or parking lots are in the stream corridor, they should be relocated outside of the corridor, if feasible. (Wildlife and Design & Development)

Strategy 3: Inspect riparian corridors along all agricultural fields every three years to determine the need for field adjustments. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: All management activities at the conservation area should follow the *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed*

by the Missouri Department of Conservation (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Conserve plants, animals, and their habitats.

Strategy 1: Manage for aquatic diversity by providing diverse habitats and good water quality management for streams, ponds and downstream neighbors. Refer to *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Identify impoundments, which are fishless or can be managed as fishless, to be managed for amphibian habitat. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The area offers numerous public use opportunities, including hunting, wildlife viewing opportunities, and photography.
- 2) We currently have good relationships with our neighboring landowners. By keeping our neighbors up-to-date with the planned management changes on the area, they can help explain these changes to other local landowners and area users as opportunities arise.
- 3) Improve educational and interpretive opportunities. This is a very rural part of the state where many of the local small schools are looking for educational opportunities outside of the classroom.

Management Objective 1: Provide for hunting, exploring and viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain parking lots and trails throughout the areas. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of species. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Continue good relationships with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors to minimize boundary and trespass issues. (Wildlife, Protection)

Strategy 2: Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner properties. (Private Land Services)

Strategy 3: Keep neighbors up-to-date on planned management changes so they can provide accurate information to community members. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Improve educational and interpretive opportunities.

Strategy 1: Provide maps and information to promote recreational opportunities to the public. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Communicate the possibilities for area educational programs to teachers and other youth leaders. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Provide portable toilets and mow trails to accommodate field trips. (Wildlife)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Ensure all easements are properly documented.
- 2) Evaluate land offered as additions to these areas.

Management Objective 1: Make sure all easements are properly filed.

Strategy 1: Use Geographic Information System to ensure that any easements are properly located. (Wildlife)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, inholdings and adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, eliminate in-holdings, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

[illegible]

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Prior to European settlement, this area included tallgrass prairie, savanna, woodland, forest, wetlands, and associated streams. The area is located in the transition zone from the Osage Plains to the Ozark Highlands which results in diverse landcover and species.

Formerly known as Winding River Ranch, the property (1,728 acres) was deeded to the Department from the NeVada P. Linscomb Trust in 1998. In 2003, Linscomb Trust purchased 146 additional acres which was deeded to the Department.

Legal Description: Township 37 North, Range 27 W, Sections 3,4,8,9,10,15,16, and 17.

Area Location: From El Dorado Springs, take Highway 82 northeast 9 miles, then Route OO north 1.5 miles.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Forest and Woodland	765	41
Cropland	484	26
Wetland	251	12
Old Field	143	8
Grassland	109	6
Native Prairie	90	5
Glade	32	2
Total	1,874	100

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Missouri Department of Conservation, Jefferson City, Missouri.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Area Easement Map

Figure 3: Land Cover Map

Figure 4: Potential Grassland Restoration Unit

Figure 1: Area Map

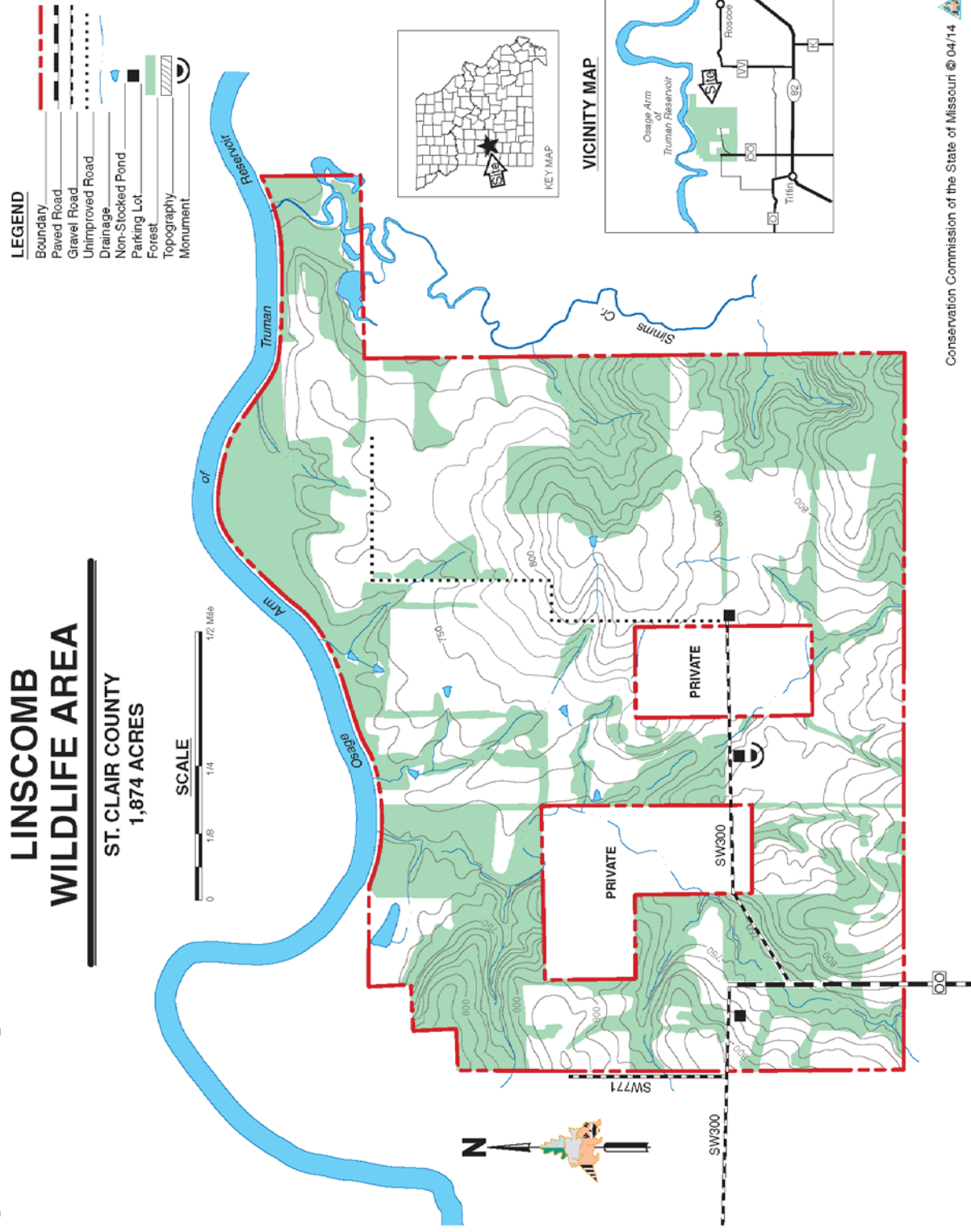


Figure 2: Area Easement Map

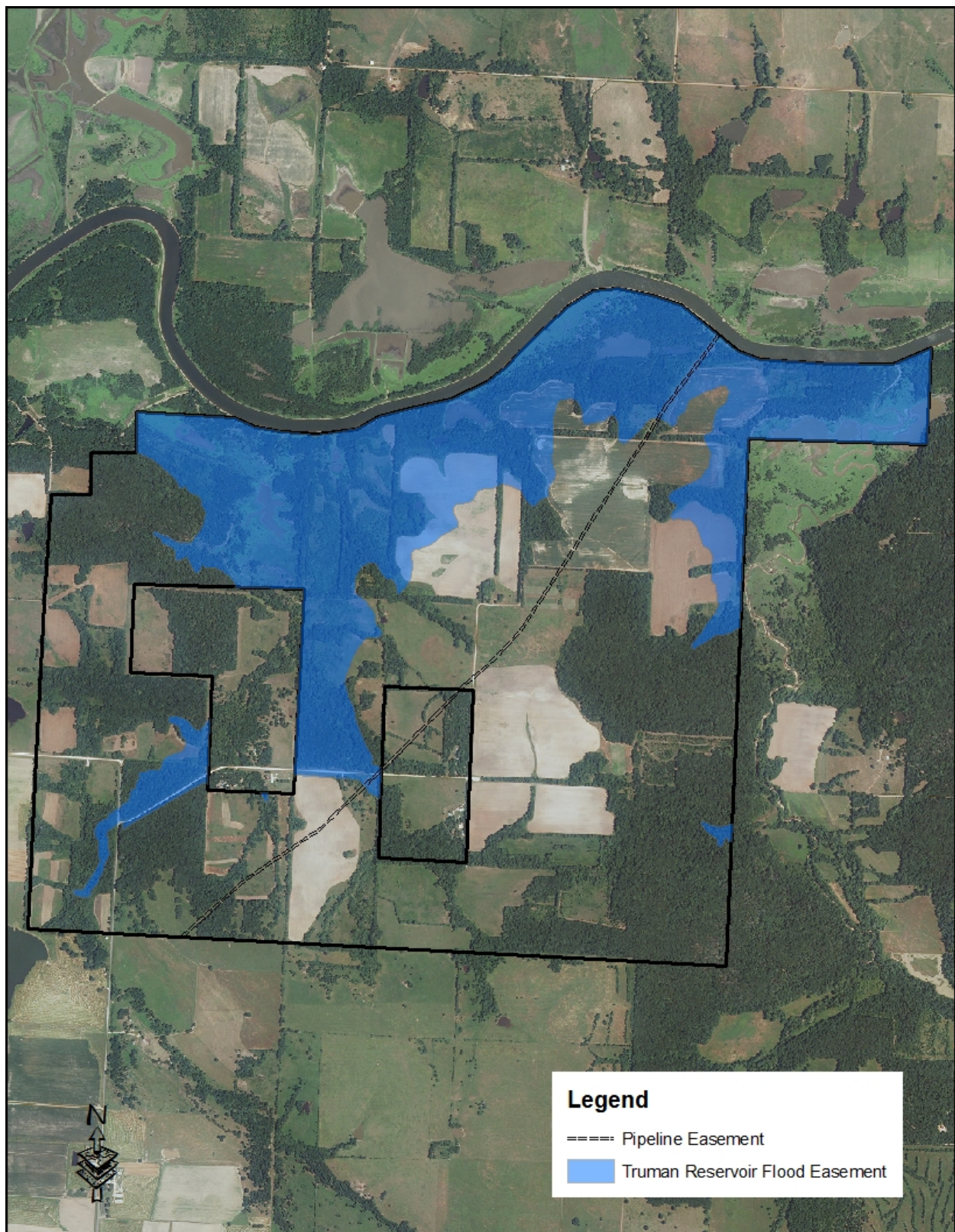


Figure 3: Land Cover Map

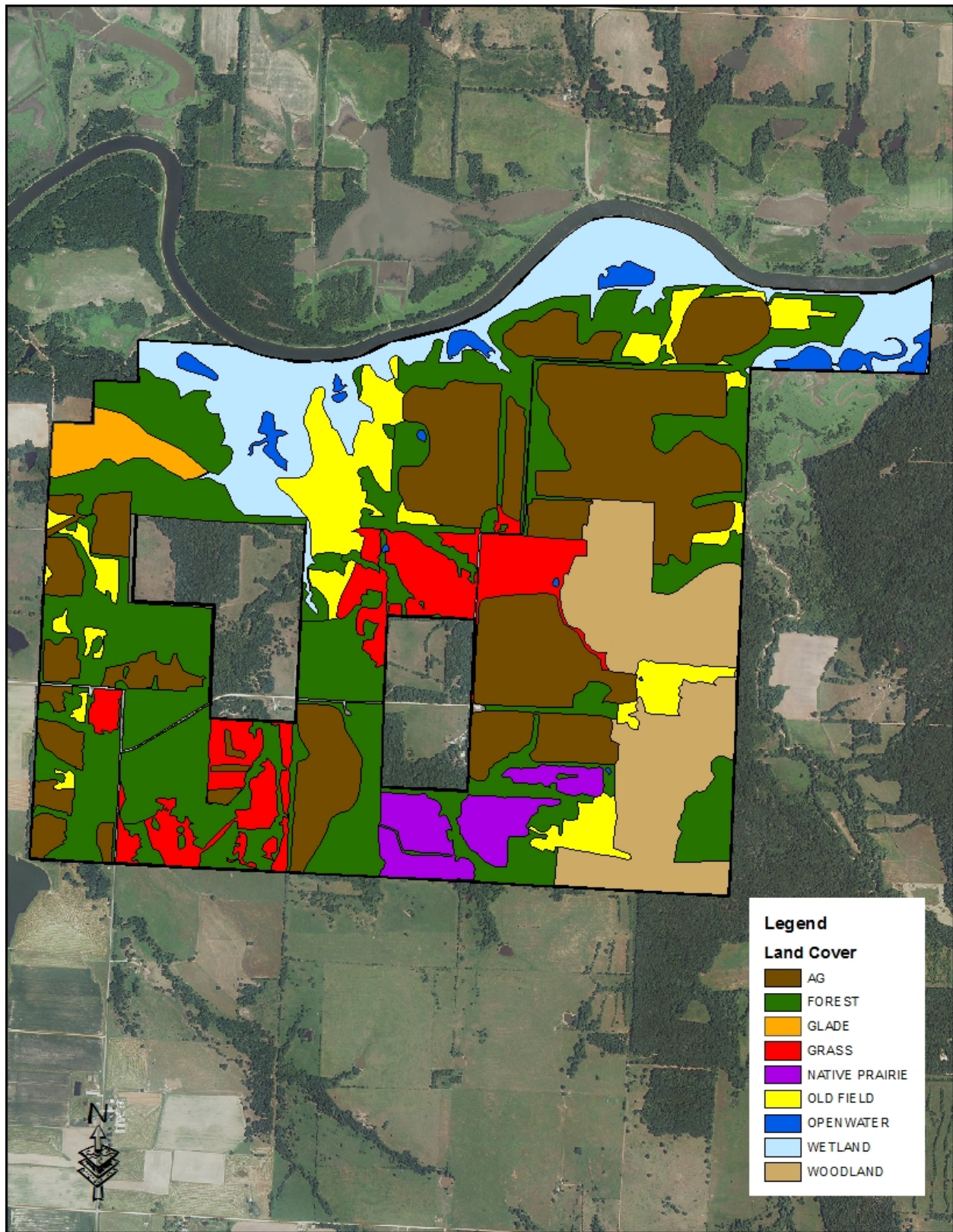
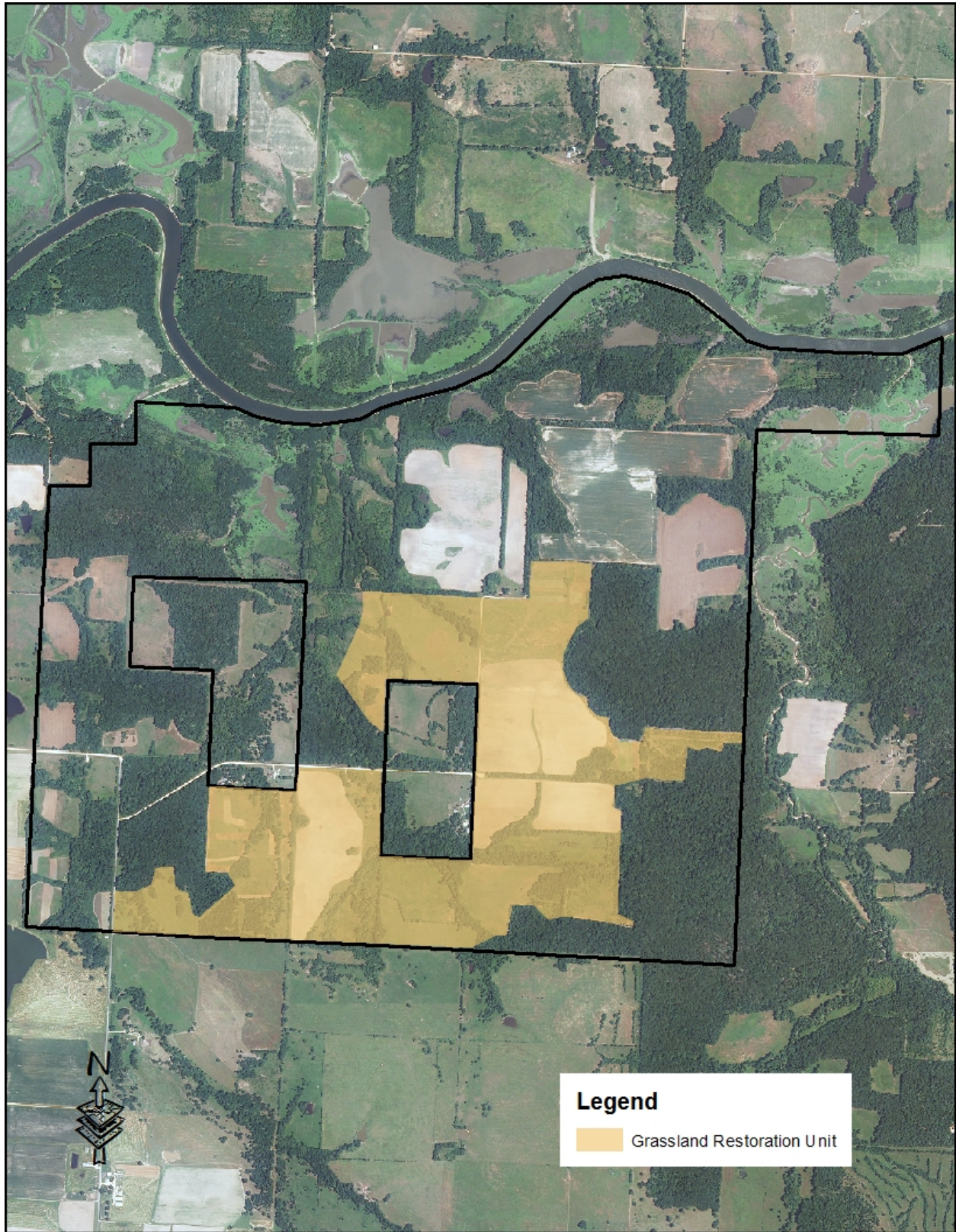


Figure 4: Potential Grassland Restoration Unit



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